

no attempt to fill the vacuum. We cannot wonder that France sought compensation in treaties with Belgium and Poland and by co-operation with the Little Entente, hoping thus to obtain the security which she had been forbidden to procure for herself.' Nor can we be surprised that she endeavoured to hold Germany down. The League of Nations was an Anglo-American creation, and she placed little confidence in its practical utility in time of need. Europe was sharply divided between the satiated and the hungry, between the Haves and the Have-nots. To the logical French mind it seemed clear that the *status quo* emerging from a hundred per cent, victory could only be preserved by her armed strength and that of her new allies. I have heard "Pertinax" contemptuously dismiss both the Covenant and the Kellogg Pact as scraps of paper. Few people expected the League to take military action, at any rate against a strong Power.

To Great Britain, on the other hand, the signing of the Covenant was more than a formality. Though nobody could tell whether the League would be a fleeting experiment like the Holy Alliance, it corresponded to a keen desire throughout the British Empire for a new departure. Our period of expansion, which had lasted for three centuries, was at an end. As a fully satisfied Power, possessing a quarter of the earth's surface and population, it was natural that we should welcome what appeared to be a stabilizing influence in the life of the world. We had made a mighty effort and we longed for a rest. A return to the isolationist policy of the nineteenth century was impossible, so close and so numerous were the ties which bound us to the Continent. It seemed equally dangerous to continue the policy of partnership with a particular Power or group of Powers, which, in the

opinion of
many people, had dragged us into the
whirlpool. For the
essence of the system of Continental
commitments is that the
enmities of any member of a group are
implicitly shared by
its associates, and that a limited conflict* is ruled
out in advance.
In any case, both the Triple Alliance and the
Triple Entente
had disappeared. The only remaining
alternative was the
method of collective security, each Power
pledging itself to
certain obligations for the preservation of
peace. This was
not enough for France, with her numerical
inferiority to
Germany and her exposed eastern frontier, but
at the moment
it seemed enough for us. The German fleet was
at the bottom
of the sea, the air arm was in its infancy. A
League policy